

# Introduction

The book *Academics of Jewish Heritage in the Modern History of the Jagiellonian University* is a collective work, anniversary commemorative publication connected with the 650<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Cracow Academy in 1364. This undoubtedly makes it one of an elite group of universities that can trace their beginnings to before the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Medieval Europe.

Professor Janusz Sondel, an eminent historian of Roman Law and expert on the history of the Jagiellonian University (UJ) has presented its European genesis as follows:

To the oldest European universities belong: the University in Bologna which in 1158 obtained the special privilege of the Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, as well as the University in Paris which equally was founded in the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The first was considered the formative legal university, the second – theological. Somewhat later there came into existence the English universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and then, in order: the university in Padua (1222), in Naples (1224), in Orleans and Toulouse (c. 1230), in Sienna (1246) and in Rome (1303). The oldest Central-European university was the University of Prague (1348), and subsequently the University in Cracow (1364), in Vienna (1365), in Pécs (1367), in Heidelberg (1386), in Leipzig (1409) and Rostock (1419). At the same time Islamic universities were equally active.

The eminent lawyer and historian of the Jagiellonian University, Professor Stanisław Waltoś emphasises the Central-European character of the Jagiellonian University to its genesis:

In 1364 King Kazimierz the Great gained after years of striving the consent of the pope to found a university in Cracow, the capital of the kingdom. This was to be the second university, following the creation of one in Prague in 1348, in Central Europe. Soon there were to be founded universities in Vienna (1365), in Pécs (1367), Erfurt (1379) as well as in Heidelberg (1386).

The General Studium – such was the official name of the university in Cracow – began its activities in fact no earlier than in 1367 and was to comprise three faculties: the liberal arts, medicine and law. Pope Urban VI did not agree to the opening of a fourth, and the most prestigious, faculty of theology. This being similar in relation to the universities in Vienna, Pécs and Erfurt.

It is now fifty years since the six hundredth anniversary celebrations of 1964. Poland then found itself shrouded, not out of its own will, in the darkness of a communist dictatorship, and as a consequence of decisions taken

in Yalta and Potsdam it had been deprived of the possibility for free and democratic development. At the midway point of that half century, changes occurred in Poland of an undoubtedly epoch-making character. It had seemed that the geopolitical arrangement of forces was a constant and, consequently, the chances of Poland regaining its political independence from the Soviet superpower were slender, even illusory. These judgements were, however, forced to bow to change: in 1989 the dream of freedom was to become reality.

The anniversary celebrations that fall in 2014 coincide with the celebration of twenty five years of the Polish Republic which was reborn in 1989. Poland in the course of this period has changed dramatically and irreversibly: political and administrative changes, coupled with social and economic ones have occurred and which tie Poland to Europe and the free world. The possibility for international cooperation on a hitherto unimaginable scale for Polish academia emerged during this time. Poland's integration within the European Union (2004) particularly enabled the country to develop in a civilizational and academic direction, making closing the gap on the developed countries of the world easier and allowing Poland to make up for the lapse which had been brought about by historical events. The Jagiellonian University is an active participant and partner in this academic, civilizational development.

The six hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Jagiellonian University is an excellent opportunity to present and recall those academics of Jewish origin who were closely associated with the history of the university, with Cracow and with Poland, and who played a huge role in Polish science and culture.

The present book is also a commemoration of those academics of Jewish origin who, together with their families, were persecuted and murdered during the Holocaust.

In the first part of the book, the texts are devoted to selected questions connected with the fate of the Jews: an outline history of Jewish relations with the Jagiellonian University, Jewish student organisations during the course of the Second Polish Republic, antisemitism at the Jagiellonian University during the second part of the 1930s, and the events of March 1968 at the Jagiellonian University.

In the second part of the book, a collection of biographical sketches of academics of Jewish origin who have written themselves indelibly into the history of the Jagiellonian University are included. These are: Julian Aleksandrowicz the doctor and hematologist, Zofia Ameisen the art histo-

rian, Juliusz Bardach historian of the law, Józef Bogusz the surgeon, Leon Blumenstock-Halban the court doctor, Józef Feldman the historian, Ludwik Gumpłowicz the sociologist, Laura Kaufman the zoologist, Hilary Lachs the chemist, Joachim Mettalmann the natural philosopher, Władysław Natanson the physicist and rector of the Jagiellonian University, Józef Oettinger the historian of medicine, Wiktor Rudolf Ormicki the geographer, Maria Orwid the doctor and psychiatrist, Stefan Ritterman the specialist in civil law, Józef Reinhold the specialist in criminal law, Alfred Rosenblatt the mathematician, Józef Rosenblatt the specialist in criminal law, Aleksander Rosner the gynaecologist and obstetrician, Antoni Rosner the dermatologist, Jan Sznajd the pharmacologist, Maria Einhorn-Susułowska the psychologist, Leon Sternbach the classical philologist, Rafał Taubenschlag the expert on Roman Law, Wiktor Weintraub the literary historian, Marek Wajsblum the historian, as well as Ferdynand Zweig the economist. This part of the book also has an entry on the Epsteins, a family of university patrons and academics, as well as a piece on Józef Sare, the distinguished university architect.

The academic potential of the Jagiellonian University is borne out by the fact that doctorates were obtained here by such eminent and famous academics, individuals of unique academic authority, the professors of first-rate universities including Ludwik Gumpłowicz, a professor of the University of Graz, Juliusz Bardach, a professor of Warsaw University, Wiktor Weintraub, a professor of Harvard at Cambridge Mass. W. Weintraub's manuscripts have enriched the collections of the Jagiellonian Library. Marek Wajsblum was a prominent historian of the Reformation, a pupil of Stanisław Kot, whose academic legacy can be found in the Jagiellonian University Library. The transfer of the collections of these academics to the Jagiellonian Library explicitly confirms and heightens their deep emotional, and intellectual, bond with the Jagiellonian University.

In part three the main academic and teaching institutions of the Jagiellonian University are presented that are connected with the history of the Jews – Jewish Studies at the Jagiellonian University from the Interdisciplinary Unit for Jewish History and Culture in Poland to the Institute of Jewish Studies, the Centre for the Study of the History and Culture of Cracow's Jews, the Jagiellonian University Centre for Holocaust Studies, Studies into the Holocaust and totalitarian systems at Jagiellonian University, the Jagiellonian University UNESCO Department for Education on the Holocaust. This institutional aspect of the book presents the intensive, interdisciplinary development of academic research and teaching which has occurred at the Jagiellonian University as a result of the political and administrative-structural transformation of post 1989.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to the rector of the Jagiellonian University, Professor Wojciech Nowak MD for adopting my initiative and concept for the subsequent publication of this book.

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### Bibliography

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